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## ABSTRACT

This is a case study of the TRY Foundation, a privately funded non-profit corporation devoting its resources to "community and human development in disadvantaged areas." Activities sponsored by its prime unit, the Willowbrook Chapter of Watts, Los Angeles, include: thrift shop, preventive dentistry clinic, Operation Vegetable Basket--which distributes surplus bread and vegetables to needy families, the Community Gap club--a club of girls aged nine to thirteen who disseminate community services information over a "hotline," Boy Scouts, tutoring, the Beautiful People--a high school sorority, Recreation Center, the twenty-niners (a group of local women who spend time assisting various TRY projects), Senior Citizens program, Auto Mechanics and Body Shop, Temporary home for Girls, and the Medical Center and Pharmacy. The Foundation was established in 1969 as an expansion of a previously-existing community problems discussion group. TRY's budget for fiscal 1970 was about \$90,000; about half of this was used to purchase real estate at the Willowbrook Chapter enclave. TRY's human development objectives include the inculcation of certain values--Protestant Ethic, orthodox religious tenants, and middle-class life style--which are considered preliminary to economic improvement; other programs consider values as a by-product of economic development. (Author/JM)

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THE TRY FOUNDATION: A CASE STUDY  
IN PRIVATE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Paul T. McClure

January 1971

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	1
ORIGIN OF TRY .....	2
The Goals .....	2
Financial Support .....	2
Beginning Operation .....	3
ORGANIZATION .....	4
Structure .....	4
Supporting Chapters .....	4
Operating Chapters .....	4
Personnel .....	5
Finance .....	6
ACTIVITIES .....	7
Selection of Activities .....	7
Goals .....	7
Resources .....	7
Impact and Benefits .....	8
Interrelationships .....	8
Flexibility .....	8
Future .....	8
Activities Underway .....	9
TRY Headquarters .....	9
Supporting Chapters .....	9
Willowbrook Chapter .....	10
The Thrift Shop .....	10
Preventive Dentistry Clinic .....	10
Operation Vegetable Basket .....	10
Child Development Center .....	11
"Communication Gap" .....	11
Boy Scout .....	12
Tutoring .....	12
Beautiful People .....	12
Recreation Center .....	12
The 29ers .....	13
Senior Citizens Program .....	13
Auto Mechanics and Body Shop .....	14
Temporary Home for Girls .....	14
Medical Center and Pharmacy .....	14
INTERNAL PERSONNEL ISSUES .....	15
Recruiting .....	15
Compensation .....	16
Employee Development .....	16
Motivation .....	16
PROBLEMS .....	18
Internal .....	18
External .....	19

ANALYSIS OF TRY PROGRAMS .....	21
Human Development Objectives .....	21
School Related Objectives .....	23
Personal Objectives .....	24
Community Development Objectives .....	25
Physical Development .....	26
Aggregated Personal Development .....	26
Data to be Gathered .....	27
POSSIBLE FUTURES .....	29
Organization Structure .....	29
Programs .....	29
Finance .....	30
Personnel .....	30
CONCLUSION .....	31

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IN PRIVATE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

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The RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, California

INTRODUCTION

This is a case study of the TRY Foundation, a privately funded, not-for-profit corporation devoting its resources to "community and human development in disadvantaged areas." This paper discusses the first year of TRY and attempts to draw lessons from their experience that will be useful to TRY and to similar programs operated by others.

TRY's activities are of interest because governmental programs with similar objectives have either not been uniformly successful or have not presented persuasive evidence of success, and because TRY operated during its first year with rather unconventional (in government terms) administrative practices. Whether the modus operandi of TRY offers any kind of a model for other organizations with similar goals or whether TRY has a euphoric view of its own accomplishment because of quick initial growth and lack of critical evaluation is discussed.

This paper describes the goals, origins, activities, and problems of TRY. It briefly examines the issues of recruiting, compensation, employee development and motivation as internal operating matters for TRY. Data now available and those that might be gathered to evaluate TRY's success in accomplishing their goals are tentatively identified. Possible futures for TRY are discussed and lessons intuitively drawn from TRY's experience are listed.

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### ORIGIN OF TRY

The TRY Foundation had three phases of birth. First was the crystallization of goals by a social group who wanted to give reality to their ideals. Next was the emergence of financial support which assured an organized program. And, finally, was the joining of forces with a Willowbrook minister already engaged in TRY-type activities.

### THE GOALS

For several years Mrs. William Perreira has hosted speakers on current topics in her home. The topics discussed, among other things, included civil rights, human development, needs of members of minority communities, and means available to deal with these problems. Some of the participants thought that too little was being accomplished, that the wrong things were being done and often for the wrong reasons.

It was decided that a merger of idealism with action, with emphasis on results not just programs, was urgently needed. Therefore, generalized goals were articulated, criteria for achievement were established, and funding was sought. This effort was designated "TRY."

For several months TRY's efforts were desultory and largely ineffective for lack of money.

### FINANCIAL SUPPORT

During early 1969, Albert Ralphs decided to establish a non-profit organization which would help to underwrite community and human development programs in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Glorynn Worthington, a member of the Perreira lecture group, saw the complementarity of her group's desire to conduct the kind of program that Ralphs wanted to aid. Miss Worthington did some quick brokering, and in May 1969 the TRY Foundation was officially chartered as a non-profit corporation by both the State of California and the

U.S. Government. Its resources now come from several sources besides Mr. Ralphs.

Officers of the TRY Foundation are:

President : Albert Ralphs (generally represented  
by Mrs. Ralphs)

Vice President: Kay Croissant

Secretary : Lois Sprague

Treasurer : Glorynn Worthington

Decisions are made by the Board of Directors that meets biweekly. An Advisory Board of professional people and citizens of the communities wherein programs are to be undertaken provides the Board of Directors with advice and counsel.

Officers and primary donors of TRY desire to remain anonymous, particularly in the communities where TRY programs are being implemented.

#### BEGINNING OPERATION

Architect Charles McIntosh, who had been working on various projects with Rev. James Mims, of the Household of God Bibleway Church in Willowbrook, heard of the incipient TRY organization. He knew that Jim Mims had for several years been engaged in the types of activity that TRY wanted to assist. Mims' day-care center for children (under Headstart), Christmas gift program, recreational programs, and adult programs had been adjuncts to and supported by the Household of God Bibleway Church. Since financial assistance from TRY would allow Mims to accelerate his work, Charles McIntosh arranged for Mims to meet TRY's Board of Directors.

Agreement to designate Mims' activities as the Willowbrook Chapter of TRY was quickly reached. Existing programs would continue, some new activities would be undertaken, a staff would be hired, and a master plan for development of a multi-building TRY enclave in Willowbrook was prepared. The staff included a director of the existing day-care center, thrift-shop manager, and a secretary.

## ORGANIZATION

Organization of TRY can be viewed as three overlays--structure, personnel and financial.

### STRUCTURE

The intended structure of TRY has some nascent elements which have not yet fully materialized; these are the 'chapters.' There are two types of chapters, supporting chapters and operating chapters.

#### Supporting Chapters

Supporting chapters are groups of women (mostly) who regularly provide volunteer services and give donations to TRY. None of these supporting chapters are formally organized, but one will soon be in Beverly Hills. These groups are women's groups at churches which consider TRY to be one of their projects, or just friends of TRY who are willing to contribute.

#### Operating Chapters

The only formally organized operating chapter is in Willowbrook. It provides almost all of TRY's thrust into the minority communities. Programs underway at the Willowbrook facilities are discussed in the next section of this paper.

Members of the TRY Board are anxious to contribute to other depressed areas, specifically some of the Mexican-American barrios, but there has not been the sort of self-help response sought by TRY; they have found people and groups willing to take money but without attempting to use it as leverage for development.

A Pasadena 'chapter' consists, at this point, of only the Director of the Westside Studies Center attempting to identify some appropriate work where TRY can assist. The Westside Studies Center now receives both government and foundation grants.



Work is underway to establish an Indian Free Clinic in Compton. This clinic has received support from the University of Southern California for a "comprehensive health planning" for the Indian community in Compton. Two recent graduates of the U.S.C. Dental School, John Ross and John Hatzel, will provide the link between TRY and the clinic. They are associated with both TRY and USC, and will volunteer some service at the clinic each week. Presumably this operation will become a 'chapter.'

Another operating area is the County of Los Angeles McLaren Hall for juveniles and the psychiatric ward of County Hospital (not located together). TRY arranged for decoration of a room at McLaren Hall. At County Hospital volunteers distribute donated Christmas gifts to patients who can then send something to their families or exchange them with one another. Some activities in the maternity building of County Hospital are being formulated.

TRY headquarters, at Beverly and Vermont Boulevards in Los Angeles, operates as a clearinghouse for inquiries about contributions, volunteer services, and programs underway and includes a conference room where the Board meetings are held.

#### PERSONNEL

Employees that operate out of TRY headquarters include the following:

- full time - secretary and editor

- part time - bookkeeper, accountant, janitor, public relations agent, and assistant editor

- A local law firm (Hill, Farrer and Burrill) on retainer.

Employees at the Willowbrook Chapter originally included Mims, a Thrift Shop manager, a Day Care Center director, and a secretary, all full time. The director and the secretary have been terminated. In June 1969, a full-time teacher was employed at the new Child Development Center.

Volunteers come into Willowbrook to deliver sellable clothing and hard goods, tutor youngsters, help renovate buildings, provide medical and dental care, give advice on home economics and hygiene, help decorate facilities, and engage in numerous other activities. The number of volunteers, the duration and frequency of their visits, and what they do is a fairly irregular arrangement.

Volunteers from Willowbrook, that is local residents, help run the Thrift Shop and participate in several other programs as counselors.

#### FINANCE

TRY's budget for fiscal 1970 was about \$90,000. This does not include non-cash gifts or contributions of time. About half of that year's budget was used to purchase real estate at the Willowbrook chapter enclave.

## ACTIVITIES

Some activities are discussed above under the heading Operating Chapters. Below is an outline of the screening process by which prospective programs are putatively evaluated, and a description of the activities underway at the Willowbrook chapter.

### SELECTION OF ACTIVITIES

The questions asked concerning each proposed new activity are grouped under the following titles: goals, resources, impact and benefits, interrelationships, flexibility and future.

#### Goals

Is the program consistent with the goals of TRY? How will it benefit society, Los Angeles, the local community, institutions or individuals? How will it effect on-going projects and long-range plans of TRY?

#### Resources

What will the program cost? What types of costs? When will costs be incurred? What are lost opportunity costs? Will revenue be generated? How much revenue and when? What is the relationship of costs to revenues? What resources will be committed for anticipated follow-on activities? What is the minimum investment needed to make a program viable? What skills of employees and volunteers will be needed? When will various talents be needed? What service penetration is required? (one hour per month, live-in, etc.) Are needed skills available? Will new people be needed or are ones with proven capability available? Will other projects suffer lack of attention? What legal requirements, licenses, etc., are needed? Can available facilities be used? Is there sufficient skill, motivation and cultural capability to absorb the proposed program?

### Impact and Benefits

What are the anticipated benefits and detriments, if any, to volunteers and participants? How enduring are the benefits? How many people will benefit and who are they? When will the program pay off, in terms of human development? What efforts will be required from the participants? What are indirect effects of the program? Is the program visible to participants, volunteers, local communities, and the news media? Will it stimulate other development efforts?

### Interrelationships

How will other TRY programs be affected? How will other public and private self-help programs be affected? Will there be overlap or competition? Have similar programs been analyzed, encouraged, discouraged, modified, etc? Will it have any affect on local politics or politicians?

### Flexibility

When could the program be cancelled? Are there clearly defined decision points? Is the program in discrete phases? Can the level of effort be easily adjusted? How fragile is the program (does it depend on one person)? Are sunk costs recoverable? How would modifying the program affect other programs, volunteers, participants, the local community, etc? What is the minimum commitment in time, dollars and manpower?

### Future

Will the program enhance or harm future programs, recruitment of volunteers, fund raising or acceptance by participants? What are the logical extensions of the program? What human capabilities will be developed that may aid future programs? Are physical (property) investments suitable for other uses? Can lessons be learned even in failure?

Programs adopted thus far have been done so mainly on an ad hoc basis. Activities already underway at the Willowbrook location have been continued under TRY sponsorship. New activities are proposed by whoever plans to direct the new program. This means relying on the intuitive judgment of TRY employees working in the served neighborhoods. As a result, evaluation of programs has taken place informally, after-the-fact, and has centered on problem resolution. At present it is believed that formal assessment of the questions listed above would have a low pay-off at this point in the history of TRY. Efforts are devoted to operating the activities rather than meeting complex administrative requirements. If TRY follows the pattern of most developing organizations, this will change as operations become more extensive and the organization matures.

#### ACTIVITIES UNDERWAY

Some of the minor programs are described above under the heading Operating Chapters. Major activities are discussed below.

#### TRY Headquarters

The activities taking place at TRY headquarters include Board meetings, administrative and clerical chores, hosting speakers, and coordinating volunteers and programs. The accounting is handled at this location, as well. Activities administered by TRY headquarters include the work at the Los Angeles County Psychiatric Hospital and McLaren Hall.

#### Supporting Chapters

Supporting chapters hold coffee klatches and often regard their TRY work as an element of business at a meeting for some other purpose. That is, a women's club may consider TRY to be just one of their projects. They host speakers, collect and deliver contributions, and schedule volunteers.

### Willowbrook Chapter

Most Willowbrook chapter activities are organized for age groups or social groups of some other sort. Three activities not organized this way are the Thrift Shop, Operation Vegetable Basket, and the Preventive Dentistry Program.

The Thrift Shop. A former hamburger stand was renovated and turned into a used clothing store called The Thrift Shop. Some used appliances, lumber, furniture and other hard goods are also sold at the Thrift Shop. The shop is operated by a group of local women called the "29ers" (described below). All revenues earned beyond costs are used for other TRY programs and for quarterly luncheons for the "29ers" who operate the shop during the preceding three months. The Thrift Shop land and building are rented. It was opened December 15, 1969. Donations include not only the goods sold, but advice on preparing attractive window displays, readying merchandise for sale within the shop, etc. There is one salaried employee.

Preventive Dentistry Clinic. An "office" has been prepared and equipped for use by a volunteer dentist twice a week; two recent graduates of U.S.C. Dental School will be operating the clinic. Preventive dentistry in this context is what more affluent people usually think of as regular dentistry--filling cavities and cleaning teeth. Many Willowbrook residents wait until a tooth is so painful and damaged that their visits to the (faraway and expensive) dentist are only to have their teeth pulled. This program is just beginning.

The dentists may be assisted by young local girls who are interested in finding out about the duties and career of a dental assistant.

Operation Vegetable Basket. Two or three days each week a truck from Ralphs Markets arrives with a delivery of day-old bread and vegetables. These vittles are distributed to needy families in the area.

When a welfare applicant doesn't qualify for assistance and has no place to live and no money for food, the County will occasionally

call on TRY to arrange temporary housing and food until the applicant can qualify for assistance.

Activities on behalf of various social groups include those for the Child Development Center, "Communication Gap," Boy Scouts, tutoring, Beautiful People, Recreation Center, "29ers" and the senior citizens program.

Child Development Center. There was a Headstart program at the Household of God Bibleway Church during 1968-69 and fall of 1969. It has been temporarily suspended while the building undergoes alterations. On reopening it will be a Child Development Center for pre-schoolers and will drop the Headstart affiliation. Local children of working or nonworking mothers will be welcome in the program. The chief teacher, beginning this summer, will be a recent education graduate who has been tutoring at TRY for several months. Up to one hundred children may be involved.

Care of the child involves access to his home because it is felt that adequate preparation for school must take place at home as well as at nursery school. Mothers who send their children will attend Saturday morning classes on home economics and hygiene. These classes are designed to show what can be done with the resources typically available to neighborhood families.

The Child Development Center operates during the day during summer and vacation periods and in the evenings during the school year. This continuous, year-round reinforcement is intended to avoid the results of giving children a shower of attention for a few months then dumping them into a slum school where it is unlikely that any gains will be sustained for long.

"Communication Gap". The Communication Gap is a club of girls aged 9 to 13 who aspire to become secretaries. They answer a 'hot-line' number for residents who need a service, such as that of a plumber, but don't know how to reach one. These girls then contact a service that is known to them personally or one that they find in the yellow pages. The girls only put people in touch with one another; they do not make appointments or discuss the cost of service.

The girls each have code numbers by which they address one another. At the very least, these girls have fun and they get to develop and practice telephone techniques.

Boy Scouts. A Boy Scout troop is sponsored. It is operated much as Boy Scout troops are anywhere.

Tutoring. School children from kindergarten through high school come to the center on Tuesday and Thursday evenings for tutoring. Tutors are mostly volunteer college students. It began in the old church and now has about 40 regular participants.

It too is used as access to the home environment. For example, it has sometime been necessary to explain to parents that the children must be fed and have sweaters or jackets before coming to class.

Beautiful People. This is a high school sorority which assists with various projects. Mainly, however, they go on social outings to the theater and the symphony, and they host formal balls. This gives them a chance to participate in sophisticated social events.

The overall intent is to develop a style of life which includes both service to others and cultural enrichment.

Recreation Center. The recreation center is a program of supervised play and social events during the summer months for school children under the supervision of high school age neighborhood Youth Corp participants and adults. The YC youngsters receive \$4 per day through a federal program.

The children are divided into three groups: up to 7 years, 8 to 10 years, and 11 to 13 years. The youngest group has about a dozen children, and is taught by Steve Spraker (the program director) a volunteer mother, and a Neighborhood Youth Corp worker. Their day consists of being picked up in the morning between 8:00 and 9:00, free play or watching Sesame Street from 9:00 to 10:00, group learning activity from 10:00 to 11:30, eating a hot lunch provided by the Council of Churches until 12:30, arts and crafts from 12:30 to 2:30, then a ride home. The program is similar for the two older groups but the content of the activity is different; for example, their



morning group activity is tutored study. Each of the two older groups have 10 to 15 participants, and is led by a volunteer college student, a teaching assistant, and a Neighborhood Youth Corps worker.

The summer program is planned around weekly subjects which include farming, fire-fighting, industry and communication, art and photography, music and dance, sports, government (2 weeks), space and computers, high school and college education, and first aid and dope. Discussion centers on each week's subject and the week culminates in a related field trip. Merits and demerits are used to determine who gets to go on the field trip; however, only the most recalcitrant are excluded.

Hot lunches and two daily snacks per child are provided by the Council of Churches and funded by a Department of Labor grant. The lunches are served family style; each person has a plate, silverware, and napkin. Everyone is served from serving dishes on the table and grace is said before eating begins. The object is to teach dining decorum that might otherwise not be learned at so early an age if at all.

The 29ers. The 29ers are a group of local women willing to spend time assisting various TRY projects. Their main ongoing activity is operation of the Thrift Shop but they aid most of the other projects as well.

Once every three months, those who have worked in the Thrift Shop are treated (from Thrift Shop revenues) to a luncheon at prominent Los Angeles restaurants. This permits them to eat where they normally wouldn't and so gives them a chance to see more of Los Angeles and cultivate good dining protocol. It is also a thank-you gesture and an incentive for them to continue work at the Thrift Shop.

Senior Citizens Program. The senior citizens program will get underway when the new Child Development Center is opened. Each senior citizen will be an assigned "grandparent" to a few children. Their role will be as a counselor, confidant, mender-of-sox and so forth to the children and a general helper at the Child Development Center. It is intended that this activity benefit both the children and the senior citizens.

Activities planned for the Willowbrook chapter include an auto mechanics and body shop and a temporary home for homeless teenage girls, medical center and pharmacy, all of which are essential to meet the needs of the neighborhood.

Auto Mechanics and Body Shop. Auto carcasses have been donated by local junk yards. The running gear and bodies have been repaired and the cars sold. This program is now being held in abeyance for lack of supervision.

Temporary Home for Girls. This program will go into operation upon completion of a dormitory, scheduled for next year. The land has already been purchased. A portion of the lower floor of the building will be a public laundromat and perhaps a dry cleaning establishment. These businesses will be operated by TRY; surplus revenues are to be used for activities that don't generate revenue.

Medical Center and Pharmacy. A medical center and pharmacy will be established and operating on an at-cost basis. It is hoped that the services of physicians will be donated. Staffing for the pharmacy and its range of inventory have not yet been determined. The doctors will be assisted by high school girls interested in careers as medical assistants.

### INTERNAL PERSONNEL ISSUES

Issues encountered during the first year of operation of the TRY foundation are recruiting, compensation, employee development and motivation. The personnel discussed here are TRY employees and some volunteers, not participants served by the programs.

#### RECRUITING

The prime criterion for hiring new employees is an allegiance to the professed ideals of TRY. The next test is whether one is willing to work for subsistence wages. The aim of recruiting is to find people who are committed to community and human development and are willing to sacrifice income in order to do that type of work. The missionary fervor sought is the same as that sought by the Peace Corps, VISTA, and churches.

Employees working at TRY headquarters are either charter members or are hired on a program, as opposed to career, basis. No thought has been given to careers for employees or long-range manpower planning. This is because TRY is new, it's small, its future activities are nebulous, and its staff lacks refined planning skills. The need for systematic recruiting of employees hasn't yet arisen; personal referral has been sufficient. Some jobs are now held by people who were previously competent and very reliable volunteers. This is the case with the new head of the Child Development Center, Steve Spraker, a former volunteer tutor and factotem.

However, the need for recruiting volunteers, sometimes with specific skills, has arisen. Once again personal referral has been the main method for finding volunteers. People who come in off the street with a potential contribution are enlisted, but these are rare instances.

A statistical analysis of hiring practices, job changes, and turn-over would be meaningless because of the dearth of employees. Each case must be considered by itself.

#### COMPENSATION

The method of setting salary is to ask the prospective employee what the minimum amount is on which he can subsist. That amount then becomes his salary, after ratification by the Board of Directors. Some lip service is paid to surveying comparable jobs to determine a reasonable salary, but there is no evidence that this is done systematically.

Despite the employees' deep commitment to TRY's goals, it is likely that more salary unrest will be aggravated by the lack of standards for setting salary. Witness the resignation of day-care director, mentioned above.

#### EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

Employee development appears to be given nearly free reign. The result is that a highly motivated employee who wants to experiment and be creative can feel free to do so. But, this also means that little standardization is available to measure results. There is no rigid institutional structure that proscribes innovation. If employee development were measured in terms of salary growth or promotion within a hierarchy, there would be little development.

Development of volunteers follows much this same pattern. Each can do whatever reasonable thing he wishes so long as it isn't detrimental to the overall program in the program director's opinion. In effect, each volunteer represents himself.

#### MOTIVATION

Thus far there has been little problem motivating the employees, due in large part to their personal commitments and the fact that they would probably be doing the same or similar work even if they were unsalaried.

Motivating volunteers and members of supporting chapters is a different matter. It is easier to generate interest and raise funds for specific projects than for a generalized cause. Membership fees

for supporting chapters are being considered as (1) a technique to psychologically cement members commitments to TRY and (2) a method of raising money. It is felt that one would want to follow up on the sunk membership cost in order to get his money's worth.

Incentives work well to motivate local area residents who volunteer for projects, such as the Thrift Shop. The prospect of a meal on-the-town has worked effectively. The weekly trips for children at the Child Development Center have also worked well.

### PROBLEMS

The first year of the TRY foundation has not been free of problems. Some problems were anticipated; some weren't. Some were internal; some were between TRY and the community.

#### INTERNAL

During March of 1970 the Advisory Committee was dissolved because it was not making a significant enough contribution to justify its existence. Former members of this committee, and others, will be called in to advise the Board of Directors only when their counsel is needed.

Some TRY participants felt that a major reason for the Committee's lack of effectiveness was that their first meeting was a banquet at the downtown Hilton, and that this set the tone for their role as advisors. Rather than actively contributing time, ideas, knowledge, etc., they saw themselves as passive members who would be entertained at TRY expense.

The director of the day-care center at the Willowbrook chapter, who was doing a competent job, resigned because he thought he was being underpaid. Also, the secretary was terminated for an indiscretion involving funds. They are only marginally missed. An answering service now takes telephone calls, and work in which a director would normally participate takes place more slowly now. Most of the work done by the director was supervising volunteers, personal public relations and miscellaneous duties; little day-care center direction as such. Mims feels that no more staff is needed at this stage of development. The former staff ended up institutionalizing matters that could have been handled informally or less formally. As more of the Willowbrook chapter activities go on-line, more staff will be needed. The only anticipated addition will be a teacher for the child-development center.

It is the intent of TRY to use indigenous help whenever possible, but this can be expensive. For example, new vans have been nearly

ruined in less than a year because of lack of care, and one structure burned down because someone tried to clean the floor with gasoline.

#### EXTERNAL

TRY was known as the TRY Foundation until recently, when it was decided to strike the word "Foundation" from the title. It seemed that "Foundation" conjured up images of great wealth. Some events on the annual goodwill mission to Mississippi last Christmas (described below on this page) and some volunteers' seeking to be paid for their services were the immediate causes for this decision.

Also the Willowbrook Chapter, actually located in Watts, is an alias for what was originally called the Watts chapter. The more euphemistic "Willowbrook" is used because the very word "Watts" has purportedly turned off some prospective donors and volunteers.

A visit by a group of foreign diplomats, sponsored by Las Damas, was to include the Willowbrook chapter day-care center on their Los Angeles itinerary. This visit was canceled at the eleventh hour by the State Department due to what was believed to be the result of pressure brought by elected officials who were unable to claim credit for TRY.

Another incident of putative political interference was the threatened cancellation of a license for failure to secure a fire permit. Since the fire permit could be obtained, this was merely an act of harrassment.

An interesting event occurred this year during Jim Mims' annual Christmas trip with gifts to Mississippi. He and his delegation had always received free lodging in the past; this year he was charged for lodging everywhere he stopped. He claimed that the reason for the charges (totaling about \$500) was that he was sponsored by an organization thought to be financially able and willing to pay. This incident was a persuasive factor in the deletion of "Foundation" from the title of TRY.

Also, Mims has been criticized for acting as a front for rich white people. To off-set this, contributions from a wider variety

of sources are being encouraged. The recent bequeathing to TRY of a \$30,000 estate by a black domestic worker with no heirs provides evidence that the criticism has little grounds.

Mims assiduously avoids political involvement. He has been approached by various candidates for office seeking his endorsement. He explains to each that his work is apolitical, and political activism would necessarily change his role and TRY's image in both the Willowbrook and Los Angeles communities. This has made some of the candidates unhappy.



### ANALYSIS OF TRY PROGRAMS

During the initial surge of growth, critical analysis of the effectiveness of various activities in accomplishing goals typically does not occur. This may be because available resources are felt to be better spent on marginal activities than not invested at all, a general euphoria pervades the staff creating some overoptimism, feedback loops haven't had time to establish, ceilings on resources haven't forced establishment of priorities among competing alternatives, and negative political pressure hasn't developed. TRY has not yet reached the level of organizational maturity requiring many hard decisions, but in order to evaluate TRY's effectiveness we will pretend they have. TRY's dual objective of human development and community development is discussed below.

### HUMAN DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

Human development by TRY's lights includes inculcation of a particular set of ideals. However laudable the ideals, the notion of explicitly instilling values smacks sufficiently of political indoctrination to make it dangerous ground for a governmentally administered and funded program. Also it is rocky terrain in the sense that changing or establishing values is too ethereal an outcome to satisfy the dollar payoff requirements that are so persuasive politically. Fortunately, the primary sponsors of TRY work with a different rationality. A program encouraging certain ideals and operated by people subscribing to these ideals is deemed sufficient as an indicator that the participants (recipients of services) will assimilate those values. Given the inability to predict, scientifically and accurately, the long-term results, this is about the most for which one can hope.

But what are the values? In a nutshell (but not in TRY's words) they include:

1) The Protestant Ethic:

Hard work for its own sake and acquisition of property for its own sake.

2) Orthodox religious tenets:

Love of mankind, allegiance to a God, nondiscrimination, nonviolence (questionably an orthodox religious tenet) and a commitment to help others.

3) Middle class life style:

Reasonable standards of health, nutrition, comfort and status.

Though one cannot gauge the total impact of TRY activities by considering the effectiveness of value assimilation in isolation, one must perforce attempt some examination of their effectiveness.

If testing instruments were available that could measure acculturation, then one could test the participants at different points in time to determine any change in their outlook and values. The results could ideally be statistically adjusted to neutralize changes resulting from maturation, economic improvement or environmental change not a product of TRY. As an alternative, scores of TRY participants could be compared to scores of the population from which the participants came. Since the former method appears feasible owing to the geographical stability of the participants and the fact that immediate proof of success isn't needed to justify continuation of a program, some testing could be undertaken. If results of similar tests are known or could be postulated for the population from which the participants come, they could be used to determine just how much different the participants are, before lengthy exposure to TRY, from that larger population. Any significant difference now may be helpful later in factoring out eventual differences resulting from personal characteristics rather than TRY's influence. Also, the problems attendant to self-serving evaluations of the effectiveness of programs should not be minimized.

The assumption that TRY's set of values will generate the sort of behavior, perception and economic performance that governmental programs apparently approach more directly (that is they avoid mentioning any change of values) reflects a basic difference in approach. TRY holds that a particular value system is an essential preliminary to economic improvement; governmental programs implicitly take the approach that values would be a byproduct of economic development, if relevant at all. In fact, TRY's approach runs counter to the more existential perspective of many other programs. These other programs often give greater emphasis to developing the participant so he can "do his own thing" and be himself. Because the key recipients of TRY services are children, rather than young adults entering the job market, much more attention is given to setting ground work so the child's "thing" will be compatible with the social, economic, and political world he is expected to find when grown. It is likely that using economic performance as the prime indicator of success of governmental programs results from its quantitative and relatively nonpolitical nature rather than any analysis of what the goals should be. Research done so far by this author has failed to uncover any testing instruments designed specifically to measure either one's devotion to certain ideals or the effect of such devotion on subsequent behavior, particularly economic behavior. If such tests aren't available, they should be developed.

Other human development goals for children fall roughly into two categories. One category is school-related; it includes improving behavior, willingness and ability to learn, retention and better use of knowledge. The other category contains more personal objectives such as being happier, having better health, and improving abilities to socialize.

#### School Related Objectives

Ability and willingness to learn and material learned can be measured in a variety of ways. Since most children in the TRY summer and tutorial program will be available for testing over a number of

years, evaluation of their progress does not rely entirely on extrapolation of short-term results. Even though it is a child's entire lifetime that the program hopes to affect, one must still use some incremental indicators of progress even if they are only penumbral surrogates for long-term, real life experience. Thus better grades, higher scores on TRY administered tests, and fewer disciplinary incidents are regarded as satisfactory standards by which to judge progress in a quantitative sense. These numerical data will give TRY a handle on how effective its program is, and will provide the hard (that is, numerical) objective evidence essential for showing TRY's success. The most convincing data (if indeed it turns out that way) show achievement of secondary objectives, while more subjective, and possibly biased judgment must be relied upon to gauge the primary goals--changes in values and life style. Given the current fetish for numerical data and economic justification, measurement of these ancillary objectives may, ironically, determine the fate of primary activities.

#### Personal Objectives

Personal development not related to school includes improving skills and motivation for good health, good manners (both rituals and general deportment), and a general feeling of well-being.

Health services are provided in the form of a checkup when a child joins the program. Hearing, sight, speech and motor defects that may impair his activity or progress in school are detected and remedied where possible. Continuing checkups are administered on a regular basis. Once again, the purpose is not only to assure good health, but also to let the children know what health services are, how to get to them, and to establish and reinforce a pattern of regular use. Arrangements have been made for exceptional medical services upon occasion. For example, one girl was sent to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, New York, for specialized treatment, entirely at TRY's expense. Other health services include teaching nutritional

practices, personal hygiene and home cleaning and sanitation. These are handled differently for various age groups and types of participants, e.g., a student vs the student's parents. The topics are discussed in class, hopefully exemplified by TRY's operating practices, and imposed on some as a condition for their (or their children's) participation. A fuller description of these activities appears earlier in this paper.

With the objectives more or less established, the question of evaluating achievement arises. Quantitative indicators are not hard to find. They include both incremental and resultive measures. The former include such things as the number of medical, dental and other examinations, inoculations and vaccinations, etc. Resultive indicators include number of sick days for various maladies, some assessment of nutritional and sanitary practices at home, number of cavities and their severity, weight and height gain, etc. These data can be used as a "history" of participants, the assumption being that positive resultive scores correlate with high incremental scores. Then, with a look at the health services and health of people in the same population as TRY participants, one can better gauge TRY's impact. These measurements, as most others, would probably focus on the children rather than adult participants.

#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

Community development is generally thought of in terms of physical development (construction) and aggregated personal development manifested in higher income, lower unemployment and under employment, less crime, better education, and community participation. Physical development and aggregated personal development will be considered separately.

### Physical Development

Renovation of the Thrift Shop, the Household of God Bibleway Church and a nearby residence, and construction of the TRY enclave are the capital investments made by TRY. Thus far, the activities and presence of TRY hasn't stimulated any other building, and there is no indication that it will in the foreseeable future.

However, neighborhood fix-up campaigns have made a noticeable impact. The Old Quaker Paint Company donated approximately 700 gallons of exterior housepaint for use by local residents. Within a few days of its availability, a difference in overall appearance of the neighborhood was apparent. It even caused a temporary upgrading in maintenance of yards in the area. Not only did this painting improve the appearance of the homes, but it created a feeling of participation and community spirit in local residents.

Community development by physical improvement resulting from TRY might (unlikely) be measured by increased property values. The effect on neighborhood cohesiveness is harder to determine. In the absence of any traditional testing instruments that could be easily applied, perhaps simply counting the number of households participating in the neighborhood development programs would be useful. Also other types of feedback to TRY, such as requests for paint when it's available again or testimonials of appreciation, etc., might provide nonnumerical data on which to judge the impact.

### Aggregated Personal Development

Aggregated personal development is the sum of changes cited above which influence averages of a neighborhood or community's characteristics. Four categories of this development include (1) economic, (2) educational, (3) values, and (4) personal matters.

Economic measures include personal worth, income, type of occupation, length of employment, job level, etc. Educational indicators are the amount of schooling completed, grades, attendance record and behavior at school. Values, the most elusive category, are mainly

deduced from results in the other three groups, but may be measured more directly by arrests, church attendance, participation in community projects, and so forth. Personal matters include use of preventive medicine, personal hygiene, nutrition, untreated infirmities and general appearance.

The categories of measurement applied in any given case would depend upon the focus of the evaluation. For example, one would be more interested in educational than economic development if he were most concerned with school-age children.

#### DATA TO BE GATHERED

A refreshing feature of current TRY operating practice is that TRY hasn't become a slave to statistics or scores on tests. The main reason for this is that TRY is still in the initial surge of growth where there are sufficient funds to pay for any program that appears fruitful. As the range of activity grows, as more money is tied up by "fixed" expenses and programs must compete for scarcer resources, tools to gauge effectiveness will be more useful for decision-making. When that threshold of bureaucratic maturity is reached, the current euphoria will diminish and anguished cries of "remember the good ol' days," will be heard. (Consider the Peace Corps and VISTA alumni who are trying to turn back the clock.) TRY shouldn't be caught short at that point in its history by not having taken preliminary steps which would allow for better evaluation of its programs.

Each child admitted to the program should continue to have to submit an application form containing information on his family and background and to undergo medical and dental checkups and whatever remedial work is warranted. General intelligence tests should also be administered so that each child's development rate can be better determined. Further, each child's performance should be graded. Test scores and grades may not be told to the child and may be of interest to teachers and tutors, but their chief value would be to provide a source of data for evaluating the effectiveness of various programs at some future time. In a way it is unfortunate to introduce more

record keeping because it takes some of the fun out of operating the program.

Specifically, the application, which should be submitted at least annually, might include: age, sex, school, grade, address, number and ages of siblings, number in household, talents, hobbies, work experience if any, and parent's place of work. Additional identifying material, a medical disclaimer and other material might be included.

The results of medical and dental examinations should be recorded along with inoculations and other medical or dental care.

Intelligence and aptitude test scores should be administered on an annual basis in order to show the rate of progress.

Information that should be maintained on participation in TRY activities could include the date and reasons for joining, attendance, a behavior assessment, grades or performance marks, special characteristics or problems and the date and reasons for termination.



### POSSIBLE FUTURES

Further development and modification will undoubtedly affect TRY's organizational structure, personnel, programs, finances and volunteers.

### ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

As the organization grows and stabilizes, the organizational structure and working relationships will become more complex. Also, there may be a stabilization of growth. At present, nobody has thought seriously about the optimum size or structure for TRY. Efforts so far have been directed toward growth on all fronts.

Sharper boundaries among the operating and supporting chapters and TRY headquarters will probably emerge. The operating chapters may eventually have to compete for funds from headquarters. Since TRY owns the property and buildings used by the Willowbrook chapter, associations between that chapter and headquarters will be closer than if, say, the facilities were rented. Property was bought rather than leased to show a long-range commitment to sustain activities of the Willowbrook chapter.

### PROGRAMS

Presently any reasonable program will be accepted and encouraged to grow, which is entirely proper for this stage of TRY's development. As a history of successes and failures is developed and as the operating chapters begin to reach saturation points of size and programs, attention will then be devoted to incremental changes and fine-tuning whatever exists at that time.

No major changes in the types of programs are foreseen. If circumstances (community needs and capabilities) change, then some appropriate alteration of programs will result. There is almost no likelihood of TRY suddenly taking a completely new direction, such as supporting hospitals or giving scholarships. Any serious discussion of these

possibilities might create dissonance diverting attention away from current programs.

#### FINANCE

An express goal is to broaden the base of TRY support through contributions of all sizes. If and when this takes place, TRY headquarters will have the dual role of raising and allocating resources. The primary role now is the latter, because no new major contributions have been pursued. The advent of membership fees will change this. Major contributors might want to be represented on the Board of Directors. Their tastes in programs might change or broaden the types of programs supported by the TRY foundation. Also resources from governmental agencies might affect both activities and reporting requirements.

#### PERSONNEL

Personnel will be added as the activities increase in size and scope. Unfortunately, the productivity of additional people cannot be measured as if the outcomes of their effort were assembly-line products. As it stands now, whether the Board is convinced to hire someone new hinges on the judgment of the head of an operating chapter. Employees will probably continue to be former volunteers or someone personally recommended.

### CONCLUSION

What lessons can be drawn from TRY's first year of experience?  
The more obvious ones are as follows:

1. Personal commitment by individuals is the single most important ingredient of success in a community and human development program of this type. These key people are found on the Board of Directors and at the Willowbrook chapter. There is little hope of launching successful major activities elsewhere until some committed, competent person is available to direct the program.
2. Support and contributions can be raised more easily for specific tasks than for generalized ideals. And it can be raised even more easily for specific objects. It is more expensive to get small contributions per dollar of gift, however.
3. Maximum impact of the programs upon individual participants can only be achieved by working with both the individual and his home environment. This is most often accomplished by conferences with parents to ensure that their child is suitably clothed and fed before going to the child-development center.
4. Adding employees is no guarantee of increased effectiveness. A limited staff is forced to set priorities and drop marginal activities.
5. Organizational names must be selected with an eye to their symbolic effects. The TRY Foundation was redesignated simply as TRY to avoid the image of a moneyed foundation in the black community; and the Watts Chapter is now the Willowbrook Chapter because of the negative reaction to Watts by some potential patrons of TRY.
6. Existing activities should be supported rather than new ones created, in the absence of contrary evidence. There is more likelihood of a legitimate need and capability and commitment to meet that need if a program is already underway than if it must be developed from scratch.

7. Quantitative data are more available, more necessary and more persuasive as the organization gets larger and its changes smaller.
8. Training must be continuous and must reach the participants systematically. That is, working with students a few minutes each day seems to be more effective than a saturation program for a few days and nothing more. And training cannot take place only at TRY; the family, school and church, if any, must also be actively involved.
9. A certain minimum threshold of involvement by contributors or volunteers is often required for their support to continue. Reaching this watershed point can be induced. For example, having paid dues to TRY stimulates a more active interest in the organization. Visitors to TRY facilities are almost immediately asked to perform some useful task which breaks the ice, lets them know that they can participate, and makes them feel like a participant rather than an observer. This "street psychology" is surprisingly effective.
10. Success of a program does not mean that the program should necessarily be expanded. Particularly during the formative stages of TRY, smaller highly successful programs help stabilize the organization. That isn't to say that risk must be avoided, but rather that one should avoid unrestrained enthusiasm.
11. Investment should be made in activities that allow flexibility. When possible, large amounts of resources should not be committed for long periods of time.

TRY has made substantial progress during its first year of operation. Its survival for a few years is fairly well assured. During TRY's second year, facilities at the Willowbrook Chapter will be readied so that a whole new range of activity will get underway. It will be a period of fast growth. Within a few years, however, the growth spurt will be over and existing activities will then have to be refined to reflect funding ceilings and community needs. TRY may provide many useful lessons to both governmental and private agencies attempting similar works.